

OPENING STATEMENT

First- I would like to commend the Bureau of Reclamation and USGS for rightly prioritizing Title XVI water reuse projects, alleviating the rural water backlog, and focusing on the streamgange system.

I have always been a firm believer and have seen first hand the effects of title XVI on a community's water supply. The Title XVI program was authorized in 1992 during the sixth year of drought in California. Since its authorization 17 years ago- Reclamation has consistently underfunded and has been consistently unsupportive of this program. We now face a third consecutive year of drought conditions and a renewed urgency and importance for Title XVI. This program is more crucial than ever. To quote Mr. Atwater, "we have reached a point where the consensus exists that this program can no longer be an afterthought."

I understand that you are currently in the process of prioritizing which Title XVI projects will receive a part of the \$135 million of American Recovery and Reinvestment Funds and \$50 million in FY 09 Budget. Please provide the final list to the Subcommittee as soon as possible.

And while we are pleased with the progress Reclamation has shown in prioritizing their projects, we still have some unanswered questions. For my friend and colleague, Representative Costa, his constituents face a dire situation of a third straight year of drought conditions. However- we are also pleased that Reclamation has decided to address the balance between ecosystem and water delivery upfront-funding restoration projects that restore the environment and but also protect water deliveries.

I also have some questions about your infrastructure portion, and the use of ARRA funds for transferred works. Reclamation still holds title and liability to these projects- though operation and maintenance costs are the responsibility of the non-federal agency. Maybe the underlying discussion we need to have at another time- is how we assist these non-federal agencies in finding a mechanism for funding these programs so as not to fall in disrepair.

For USGS, now is certainly not the time to lessen our water data by discontinuing gages. I have some questions regarding your streamgage system.

Again Reclamation and USGS I commend your work in prioritizing projects and look forward to your testimony. To all our

witnesses, I look forward to your perspective on the reasoning behind Reclamation and USGS prioritized decisions methods. I also want to ensure that through the process some accountability and transparency will be in place in safeguarding public funds.

I now yield to my friend and Ranking Member, Cathy McMorris Rodgers for any statement she may have.